

Open Enrollment Edition - Part II

Open Enrollment is well underway. If you need to enroll in or make changes to your PEEHIP coverage, the preferred method is online through Member Online Services. The majority of all Open Enrollments are made online. Online enrollment is simple, efficient, convenient, and free to use!

When to Enroll Online:

- ◆ Online Enrollment began **July 1 and ends September 10**. If you miss the deadline to enroll, you must wait until the next Open Enrollment period.

How to Enroll Online:

- ◆ Go to www.rsa-al.gov, click Member Online Services and log in using your self-selected User ID and Password.
- ◆ If you have not already registered for a User ID and Password, you may do so by clicking the “Register Now” button on the log in page and

follow the on-screen prompts.

- ◆ Once you successfully log in, click “Enroll or Change PEEHIP Coverages” from the PEEHIP menu at the left of your screen, then click the “Open Enrollment” option. Follow the on-screen prompts until you get a Confirmation page.

What You Need to Enroll Online:

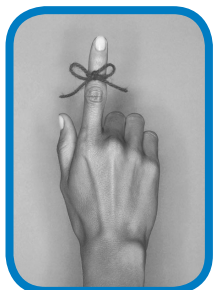
- ◆ Social Security numbers for you and your eligible dependents.
- ◆ Your PID number (personal identification number). You will need your **PID** to complete the registration process. The subscriber’s PID is the last eight digits of the contract number on the insurance card. If you are not a current subscriber, your PID can be found on your Open Enrollment notice that was mailed to you in June.

Remember, if you wish to continue the current insurance coverage you are enrolled in and do not want to make changes to your PEEHIP hospital medical or optional coverage plans, you do **not** need to complete new forms. You will automatically remain enrolled in your present insurance coverage.

Exception: Eligible members must re-enroll each year to renew the Flexible Spending Accounts and the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Discount. Online enrollment is available for Flex but not for FPL. You must submit a paper FPL enrollment form along with the required supporting documentation to PEEHIP to apply for the FPL discount.

Visit the PEEHIP Open Enrollment web page at www.rsa-al.gov/PEEHIP/open-enroll.html for more information about online enrollment and Open Enrollment. ■

Remember the Open Enrollment Deadlines



July 1 - September 10

Online enrollment

July 1 - August 31

Paper forms enrollment

July 1 - September 30

Flexible Spending Accounts online and paper enrollment

Don't Miss Out on Your Chance for a Real Tax Break!

Enroll in PEEHIP Flexible Spending Accounts

We are all looking for ways to increase our spendable income and participating in PEEHIP's Flexible Spending Account (FSA) program is one way that really works! You save money by not paying taxes on the contribution amounts you elect for the health care FSA and the dependent care FSA. This allows you to keep more of the money you earn! Active employees can enroll in a flex account during Open Enrollment and can now choose the Flex Debit Card as their reimbursement option for the health FSA. For more information about PEEHIP's flex program and the flex debit card, see the July 2012 *PEEHIP Advisor* or the PEEHIP FSA web page at www.rsa-al.gov/PEEHIP/flex.html.

Are You Combining Allocations?

Enrolling in Separate Accounts May Be More Cost Efficient

The Combining of Allocations Program terminated October 1, 2010, but was phased out over a three-year period which will end effective October 1, 2012. All participating members who were grandfathered in during the three-year phase out will be subject to the full family premium rates beginning with the October 2012 coverage period. Refer to your June 2012 *PEEHIP Advisor* or the website for the rates.

In many cases, a husband and wife with no other dependents may find that it is more cost efficient to change to two single policies during the Open Enrollment period. The majority of these couples have enrolled in single policies during the last two

Open Enrollments but there are still approximately 487 couples who have not.

The easiest, most efficient and preferred way to uncombine allocations and enroll in single hospital medical plans is online through Member Online Services (MOS).

- ◆ The subscriber of the hospital medical policy (for example, the receiver of the allocation) must first change **from** family hospital medical coverage to single hospital medical coverage through MOS using the subscriber's PID number and log in credentials.
- ◆ Once you receive a confirmation page generated by MOS

confirming this election, the sender of the allocation should then log in to MOS using their own PID number and User ID and Password and enroll in single hospital medical coverage and receive a confirmation page confirming this election.

- ◆ **Your confirmation page will also provide your premium calculation.**

NOTE: You do not have to enroll in separate Optional Plans (i.e. Dental, Vision, etc.). For example: If you currently have family Dental, you can continue the same family dental plan and **DO NOT** have to enroll in separate single dental plans. ■

Remember to Check your Paycheck Stubs Regularly

Members should check on a regular basis their paycheck stubs, retirement check stubs, or the payment amount if receiving their check by direct deposit to ensure the proper premiums are deducted. Retirees who receive their retirement checks by direct deposit can verify their premium deductions online through Member Online Services by clicking the View Account Information link under the TRS menu.

Members are mailed an insurance notification every year prior to Open Enrollment which shows their current insurance coverages and the tobacco status for both the member and spouse. PEEHIP's refund policy will only allow a refund of premium payments for a maximum of twelve months from the date of request when the reason for a refund is member failure to notify PEEHIP of a change that results in a reduction of member premiums.

The new deduction for changes made to your PEEHIP insurance coverage during Open Enrollment will be reflected in your September paycheck or retirement check. Flexible Spending Account contributions for active employees enrolling or re-enrolling will be deducted from their October paycheck.

Be diligent in checking your deductions on a regular basis and avoid unnecessary overpayments or underpayments! ■

Important Notice About Your Prescription Drug Coverage & Medicare

Please read this notice carefully and keep it where you can find it. This notice has information about your current prescription drug coverage with PEEHIP and about your options under Medicare's prescription drug coverage. This information can help you decide whether or not you want to join a Medicare drug plan or keep your PEEHIP drug coverage.

If you are considering joining a Medicare drug plan, you should compare your current coverage, including which drugs are covered at what cost, with the coverage and costs of the plans offering Medicare prescription drug coverage in your area. Information about where you can get help to make decisions about your prescription drug coverage is at the end of this notice.

There are two important things you need to know about your current coverage and Medicare's prescription drug coverage:

1. Medicare prescription drug coverage became available in 2006 to everyone with Medicare. You can get this coverage if you join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or join a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) that offers prescription drug coverage. All Medicare drug plans provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans may also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.
2. PEEHIP has determined that the prescription drug coverage offered by PEEHIP is, on average for all plan participants, expected to pay out as much as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage pays and is therefore considered Creditable Coverage. Because your existing PEEHIP coverage is Creditable Coverage, you can keep this coverage and not pay a higher premium (a penalty) if you later decide to join a Medicare drug plan.

When Can You Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

You can join a Medicare drug plan when you first become eligible for Medicare and each year from **October 15th to December 7th**.

However, if you lose your current creditable prescription drug coverage, through no fault of your own, you will also be eligible for a two (2) month Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to join a Medicare drug plan.

What Happens To Your Current PEEHIP Coverage If You Decide to Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

If you do decide to join a Medicare drug plan and drop your PEEHIP drug plan, your current PEEHIP drug coverage will terminate on the date that you enroll in a Medicare drug plan. Please be aware that you and your covered dependents will lose the PEEHIP drug coverage and you will not be able to get this coverage back until you drop the Medicare Part D coverage. You cannot have PEEHIP prescription drug coverage and Part D coverage at the same time.

If you enroll in a Medicare drug plan, you and your dependents will still be eligible for your current PEEHIP health benefits but will have no **prescription drug** coverage under PEEHIP.

When Will You Pay A Higher Premium (Penalty) To Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

You should also know that if you drop or lose your current coverage with PEEHIP and do not join a Medicare drug plan within 63 continuous days after your current coverage ends, you may pay a higher premium (a penalty) to join a Medicare drug plan later.

If you go 63 continuous days or longer without creditable prescription drug coverage, your monthly premium may go up by at least 1% of the Medicare base beneficiary premium per month for every month that you did not have that coverage. For example, if you go nineteen months without creditable coverage, your premium may consistently be at least 19% higher than the Medicare base beneficiary

premium. You may have to pay this higher premium (a penalty) as long as you have Medicare prescription drug coverage. In addition, you may have to wait until the following **October** to join.

For More Information About This Notice Or Your Current Prescription Drug Coverage...

Contact PEEHIP at 877.517.0020 for further information. **NOTE:** You will receive this notice each year and you may request a copy of this notice at any time.

For More Information About Your Options Under Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage...

More detailed information about Medicare plans that offer prescription drug coverage is in the "Medicare & You" handbook. You will get a copy of the handbook in the mail every year from Medicare. You may also be contacted directly by Medicare drug plans.

For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage:

- ◆ Visit www.medicare.gov
- ◆ Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see the inside back cover of your copy of the "Medicare & You" handbook for their telephone number) for personalized help
- ◆ Call 800-Medicare or 800.633.4227. TTY users should call 877.486.2048.

An exception may apply to certain "low-income" individuals who may be eligible for prescription drug subsidies, and thus may be better off applying for a subsidy and Part D (two separate steps). For information about this extra help, visit Social Security on the web at www.socialsecurity.gov, or call them at 800.772.1213 (TTY 800.325.0778).

Remember: Keep this Creditable Coverage notice. If you decide to join one of the Medicare drug plans, you may be required to provide a copy of this notice when you join to show whether or not you have maintained creditable coverage and, therefore, whether or not you are required to pay a higher premium (a penalty). ■

From Wallet to Waistline

Source: Alabama Department of Public Health

Have you ever noticed that you only spend a few cents more to get a larger size of fries or soft drink? Getting a larger portion of food for just a little extra money may seem like a good value, but you end up with more food, fat and calories than you need.

The hidden costs of super-sizing:

- ◆ **Super size your french fries:** An extra 64 cents buys 330 more calories.
- ◆ **Super size your regular soft drink:** An extra 60 cents buys 260 more calories.
- ◆ **If you choose the combo hamburger meal rather than a burger:** An extra \$1.41 buys 660 more calories.
- ◆ **If you choose the medium unbuttered movie popcorn rather than the small:** 71 cents buys 500 more calories.

Before you buy your next “value combo,” be sure you are making the best choice for your health and wallet. If you are with someone else, share the large size meal. If you are eating alone, skip the special deal and order just what you need.

Research shows when people are served more food they eat more food! ■

Sugar: Measure it Wisely

Source: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama

What’s the scoop on sugar? Today’s parents worry about their children eating too much sugar and how it could be affecting their health. Nutritionists are very concerned about the alarming increase in the number of children with diabetes. That increase is attributed in part to an American diet with too much processed sugar.

Sugar has earned the title “empty calorie food.” It gives children a short boost of energy, but not enough vitamins and minerals. “Sugar highs” often result in “behavior lows.” After that initial burst of energy, kids who’ve consumed too much sugar may become hungry again or tired and irritable.

Nutritionists recommend that if little ones are asking for something sweet, offer them fruit or a granola bar that has nutrients along with good taste. If you are facing a battle with a child who won’t eat healthy foods, such as oatmeal or carrots, take Mary Poppins’ advice: “A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down.” Eating lightly sweetened healthy foods is better than eating no healthy foods at all. Consider this sugar consumption in your child’s overall daily intake of processed sugar.

Teach your child to enjoy naturally sweetened flavors. If you start when your children are just beginning to eat solid foods, you can teach them to appreciate and enjoy the natural sweetness found in many vegetables, fruits and grains. ■

Healthy Eating Made Easy

Source: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama

Nutrition Tips for Your Family

Eating healthy doesn’t have to cost a fortune. Learning to make smart choices can help you improve your nutrition, manage your weight and save some cash at the same time.

Share these ideas with your employees.

- ◆ **Eat out less often.** The perceived value of larger portions at restaurants and fast food outlets is outweighed by the money many of us spend on diets, weight loss books, gyms and fitness fads.
- ◆ **Choose frozen.** The vibrant color of frozen foods indicates antioxidants and vitamins – they contain just as much nutrition as fresh. Buy frozen produce in bulk, and store in your freezer.
- ◆ **Buy local.** Check out your local farmers’ market for fruits and vegetables that are in-season and locally

grown. They are often free of pesticides and usually cheaper than grocery store produce.

- ◆ **Drink water instead of soda.** Not only is water healthier for you, it’s free!
- ◆ **Get your protein.** Eat eggs, beans or tuna for a cheaper alternative to meat. All of these are full of protein and vitamins. When you eat meat, reduce portion sizes or add frozen vegetables or grains to meat dishes and stews to extend the servings and stretch your dollar.

Did You Know?

There is often a difference between health foods and healthy foods. Health foods can be highly processed and expensive, so focus on simple, healthy foods that can save not only your money but your health too! ■

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